Volume 7, Edition 9

# Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club WIRELESS

November 2003

## VOMARC Christmas Party December 17
### Santa will greet us at Little Switzerland mit cocoa and strudel

### FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL

Another Pacificon has come and gone. I do like the new location at the San Ramon Marriot. There is more room for the swap meet, its closer to places to eat and no problems with security issues. There were quite a few VOMARC members present. I ran into our speaker from the October meeting and he presented me with a new copy of the 2003 ARRL handbook as a gift to our club. How about a raffle at the next meeting?

After attending a couple of talks on antenna modeling and the new ARRL Antenna Handbook, Darrel and I decided to buy one for the club. I have been learning how to use the EZNEC program to model antennas. Hopefully, I can show this program to the club on some future meeting.

I am not too sure I want to get into the latest controversy concerning the Sonoma P.D. , but I feel that it could impact the way we do our emergency communications. I also think (again my gut feeling) that the town should keep its own police department. I will bring the issue up at the next meeting to get your input.

Even though the HF bands are not the greatest, I happened to be listening on 15 meters yesterday around 5:00 pm and only heard a few signals. I managed to work YC8BU, Indonesia. I guess the thing to do is turn on the radio and give a listen.

The December Christmas dinner is at the Little Switzerland on Dec. 17th. We will have all the

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information and the reservation form in the next newsletter.

Oops, nearly forgot this one. The Chamber of Commerce is putting on an open house at the Sonoma Fire Station on the 20th of November.  We could show the community what we are about by setting up a table with a demo station, some literature, and ACS information.  Let me know if you can help.

Keep in mind the threats to our spectrum.  Help the ARRL by joining if you are not a member and by supporting the organization with a donation.

See you on the air. 73, Jim, K6UUW

## For Sale

**FREE**

500 MHz counter. It is in working condition with full documentation. This is an antique vacuum-tube counter, with 8 nixie tube readout,  in a 7" rack box. It is the military FR110/U, originally good to 1 MHz,  but in the late '70s I built in a sold-state pre-scaler good to 500 MHz. It has a very accurate ovenized time base, and it also does event counting and time interval (wanna time a bullet?).

Mike, WB6TMH 996-4157

## VOMARC MINUTES 10/15/03

Minutes for VOMARC meeting 15 Oct. 2003 at Sonoma Fire Station

Meeting brought to order at 1930 hours by Jim K6UUW.

Andy Oppel, N6AJO, from the ARRL Pacific Division office, is featured speaker. Bill Hillendahl, KH6GJV, ARRL S.F. Section Manager is also visiting.

Noted that Henry, KK6PH had surgery today and that Steve K2IYQ is doing well.

Andy Oppel makes "Future of Amateur Radio" presentation and a discussion of BPL, including the 5 minute video by Ed Hare, W1RFI, demonstrating the interference caused by HF RF signals over power grid. (download www.arrl.org/tis/info/html/plc). Information to be collected about BPL and Morse code later.

Business meeting begun at 2045.

Minutes read and approved.

**Old Business -**
As of Sept 30th there is $2200.20 in the bank.

Correspondence and donation from Sam Peterson, KF6DKP. A "Thank You" note to be sent.

Statement for filing of certification for nonprofit organization status. Fee $20.

**Committees -**
Solar panels. Some parts are at Steve, K2IYQ's house. Newsletter on the VOMARC web site. Web Master Jan, AE6FQ

welcomes help with content.

**New Business -**
Hospital Drill announced for November.
Christmas Dinner December 17th at Little Switzerland.
Pacificon October 17-19 in San Ramon.
Net control for November is Dan KG6LJN.

This is the month to nominate officers.
President: Jim K6UUW, George K6ITE, Dick KF6FZM.
Vice President: Dan KG6LJN
Secretary: Joan W6WXU
Treasurer: Jan K9OOU

Ed, KA6OFR, is doing the club badges.

Chamber of Commerce meets on 3rd Thursdays. November 20th at the Sonoma Fire House. VOMARC could have a booth with a CD player and Lap Top for presentation. Promote ACS. Jim K6UUW, Eileen KG6QNT, Dick KF6FZM and Dan KG6LJN..

Raffle won by Dave Chan WZ6X, visiting from American Canyon.

Submitted by Dan Sorrick KG6LJN / George K6ITE

**NET CONTROL GUIDLINES**

I thought the following net control script might help some of our newer members when they take their turn as net control.

**Preamble:**
"Good evening, and welcome to the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club Wednesday night net. This is (state your name and call-sign), net control station for the evening.

"This net meets every Wednesday night at 7:30 pm, with the exception of meeting night, which is the third Wednesday of the month. Meetings take place alternately at McDougal hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center or at the Sonoma Fire Station, 630 Second Street West in Sonoma, also at 7:30 pm.

"The purpose of this net is to discuss business and events relating to the activities of VOMARC. The club welcomes and encourages new members. Any persons wishing information about the club may direct inquiries to the net control station, or correspond in care of the Sonoma Police Department.

"At this time I'll break for any emergency or priority traffic. (Drop repeater and pause). Hearing none, I will proceed with the roll call of active members."

Either call roll off a copy of the current roster, or call for alphabetical check-ins according to call- sign suffix. I usually break the check-in into alphabetical groups A thru E, F thru J, K thru O, P thru T, and U thru Z. I make a work sheet for the month with members' call-

signs and names arranged by these groups and check them off as they check in, by saying "Stations with suffix ____ check in now please".

As club officers check in, make some note of it so you know who is on the net when you need to call on them for reports from officers. If you're not sure who's who, make a list of officers beforehand and highlight it as you get check-ins.

After going through the roll call, make a request for any late or missed members or visitors.

### Net Proceedings
1. Request announcements from the order of listed officers, if they have checked in.
      President
      Vice-president
      Treasurer
      Radio officer
      Training officer
      ACS unit leader
      Public information officer
      Antenna resource chairman
      Club historian
2. Open the net for discussion of any old or pending business.
3. Open the net for any new business or events.
4. Make a final request for any announcements by any member or visitor.
5. Close the net by saying "This concludes the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club Wednesday night net. I will now return the repeater back over for normal traffic. Thank you, this is (call sign), clear".

### Some notes on net procedures
As Net Control, you are in control. All traffic for the net needs to be placed through you. Persons wishing to speak need to be acknowledged by you after they make a request, such as saying their call, "break", "comment", "info", etc. "Break, break" is for emergencies and should be acknowledged immediately.

Try to avoid having a debate on the air between two stations without your intervention. The net is for discussions by all who have checked in, not a select few. Give all persons a fair chance to make their comments.
During check-in, some members will try to unintentionally steer the net in the wrong direction by making announcements. Don't let this hinder the roll call. Acknowledge them and advise them that you will call on them for their announcement at the proper time.

At times, more than one station will transmit at once. It is up to you to announce the "double" and diplomatically give one station the air time.

Lastly, you are not "entertainment" for those on the net. You may make comments as you see fit, but don't try to hold up a sagging net. If you run through the proceedings and nobody has anything to say, you may as well close the net. Please don't forget to identify yourself (ID)

every 10 minutes, usually by saying "This is (your call sign), net control".

Being a net controller is a great experience in understanding and practicing the basic concepts of discipline that set the Amateur radio service apart from others in times when we can be a valuable asset. Please try to take this seriously and learn from it as it will help you in all aspects of your enjoyment of Amateur Radio.

(Part of this appeared in the last Wireless)

## HOW SPECIFICATIONS LIVE FOREVER

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When you see a space shuttle sitting on the launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank.  These are the solid rocket boosters, or SRBs.

The SRBs are made by Morton Thiokol at a factory in Utah.

Originally, the engineers who designed the SRBs wanted to make them much fatter than they are.  Unfortunately, the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site in Florida and the railroad line runs through a tunnel in the mountains.  The SRBs had to be made to fit through that tunnel.

Now, the width of that tunnel is just a little wider than the U.S. Standard Railroad Gauge (distance between the rails) of 4 feet, 8.5 inches.

That's an exceedingly odd number.  Did you ever wonder why that gauge was used?  Because US railroads were designed and built by English expatriates, and that's the way they built them in England.

Okay, then why did the English engineers build them like that?  Because the first rail lines of the 19th century were built by the same craftsmen who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

I'll bite, why did those craftsmen choose that gauge?  Because they used the same jigs and tools that were previously used for building wagons, and you guessed it, the wagons used that wheel spacing.

Now I feel like a fish on a hook!  Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing?

Well, if the wagon makers and wheelwrights of the time tried to use any other spacing, the wheel ruts on some of the old, long distance roads would break the wagon axles.  As a result, the wheel spacing of the wagons had to match the spacing of the wheel ruts worn into those ancient European roads.

So who built those ancient roads?

The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions.  The roads have been

used ever since.

And the ruts?
The initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagons, were first made by Roman war chariots. And since the chariots were made by Imperial Roman chariot makers, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Well, here we are. We now have the answer to the original question. The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman army war chariot.

Specs and bureaucracies live forever.

That's nice to know, but it still doesn't answer why the Imperial Roman war chariot designers chose to spec the chariot's wheel spacing at exactly 4 feet, 8.5 inches.

Are you ready?

Because that was the width needed to accommodate the rear ends of two Imperial Roman war horses!!!

Well, now you have it. The railroad tunnel through which the late 20th century space shuttle SRBs must pass was excavated slightly wider than two 1st century horses' butts.

Consequently, a major design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was spec'd by the width of a horse's behind!

So, the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horses' rear end came up with it, you may be exactly right. Now you know what is "behind" it all.

~Author Unknown~

(I thought Kermit and Ed would enjoy this.-Ed.)

***Receipt of the Wireless is one of the most sought after benefits of membership in VOMARC.***

**CLUB MEETINGS** are held on the third Wednesday of each month, alternating between McDougal Hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center, Eldridge, and the Sonoma Fire Station, 630 2$^{nd}$ Street West, Sonoma. Meetings start at 19:30 local (7:30 P.M.).

**WEB PAGE:**
**http://www.vomarc.org/**

**Nets** are held every Wednesday night at 19:30 (7:30 P.M.) local, except meeting nights on the 145.350 repeater, -600 kHz, PL 88.5 Hz.
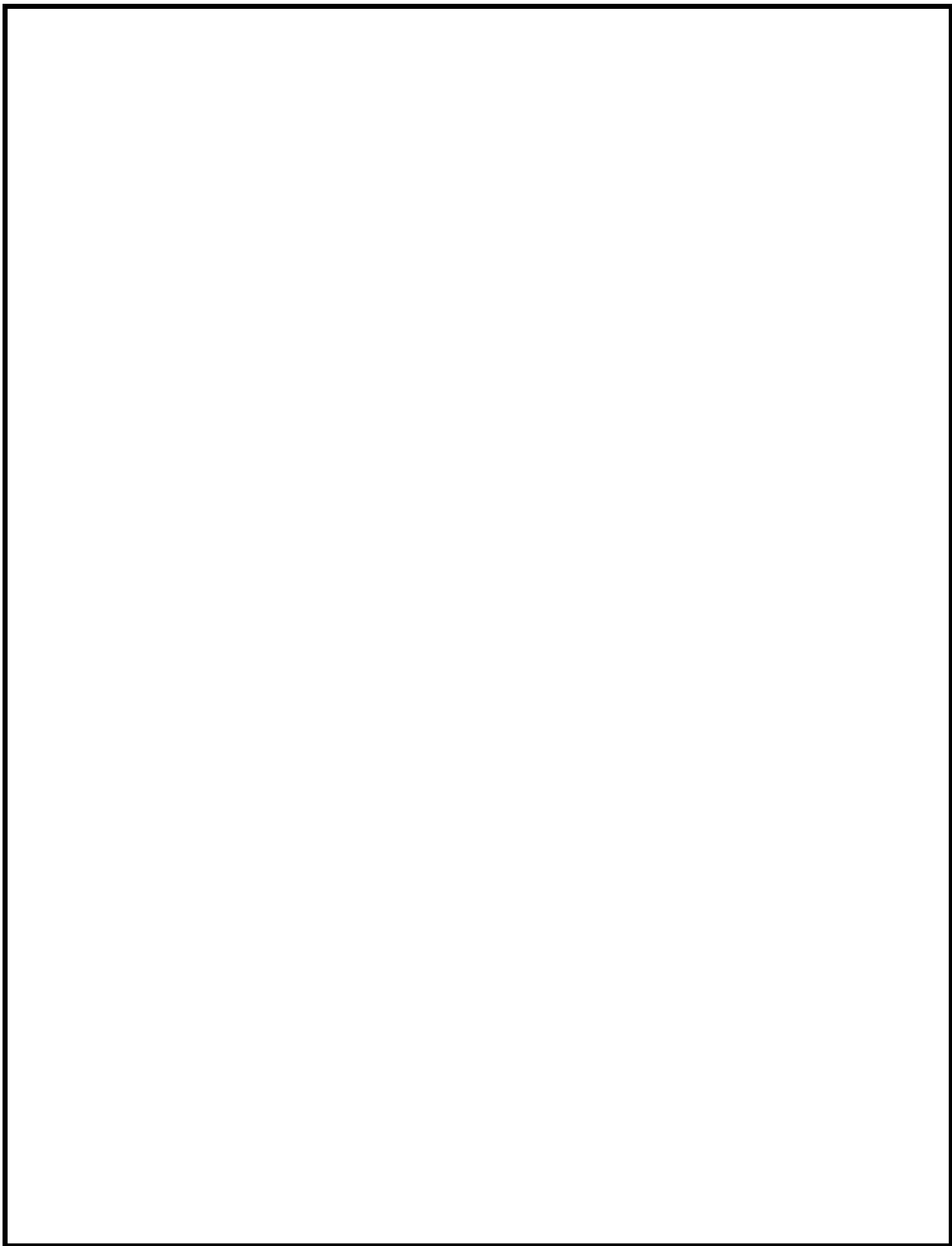
**ACS** holds a net each Monday evening at 19:30 local on the 146.205, +600, PL 88.5 Hz repeater.

**PACKET STATION INFO:** The VOMARC packet station is on 144.910 as "SNV1EC". "SNVGW" can be used as a gateway digipeating on 223.66 MHz. The node name is "SNVND".

**CLUB BREAKFASTS** are held on the first Saturday of each month at Issa's Restaurant, 18999 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma. The fun starts at 09:30 local.

Comments and submissions of material may be sent to:
WD6BOR@VOM.COM

**Valley of the Moon ARC, Inc.**
175 First Street West
Sonoma, CA 95476

**Valley of the Moon ARC
1496 Nut Tree Lane
Sonoma, CA 95476**

**NOTICE!!! THE NOVEMBER VOMARC MEETING IS THIS WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, AT 7:30 P.M. IN MCDOUGAL HALL AT THE SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER. CU THERE!**

**VOMARC MEMBERSHIP**

**VOMARC 2003**    Membership Dues:    $10/year individual;  $5/year family member.

VOMARC encourages its members to join the ARRL. More information is available at www.arrl.org.
QST is available to blind and physically handicapped individuals on audio cassette from the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.  Call 1-800-424-8567.

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VOMARC:$_____ARRL:$_____TOTAL:$_____

Your check should be made payable to:    **VOMARC –** 1496 Nut Tree
Lane, Sonoma, CA  95476